

*The RICH MAN's Bounty, the True
Measure of His Wisdom.*

A
S E R M O N
Preached before the
L O R D M A Y O R,
A N D
Court of Aldermen,
A N D
C I T I Z E N S of L O N D O N:
A T

St. **Brides Church**, Easter-Wednesday,
March, 27. 1695.

By John Hapletoft, D. D. Vicar of St. Lawrence-Jury.

Σοφὸς ἀνδρῶν ὃ καὶ Θεοφιλὴς ἔς ὅσον οἱ ἄλλοι μοχθεῖν τῇ
σώματι ἐνεκα, τοσούτω ἀπουδάξει αὐτὸς ὑπερ ψυχῆς ποιεῖν,
Demophil.

*He is a Wise Man, and Dear to God, who takes as much
Care for his Soul, as others do for their Bodies.*

L O N D O N, Printed for Brabazon Aylmer at the Three
Pigeons against the Royal Exchange in Cornhill, 1695.





LUKE, Xii. Ver. 21.

So is he that layeth up Treasure for himself, and is not Rich towards God.

THese Words are the Result, and Conclusion of a Parable spoken by our Blessed Lord: The Occasion of which was this. One of his Hearers had Interrupted him, whilest he was discoursing about some of the great Duties and Rewards of our H. Religion, with a Request, that he would decide a difference between him and his Brother, about an Estate fallen to them in common: This our Lord refuseth to do. Man, saith he, *ver. 14. Who made me a Judge or a Divider over you?* For, coming upon business of a much greater importance, he would not engage himself in these lesser matters. But from hence he takes occasion to Caution his Followers, against setting their Hearts too much upon transitory things; and he said unto them, *Take heed and beware of Covetousness*, Ἀπὸ τῆς πλεονεξίας; i. e. of having and desiring more than you need, or more than you ought to have: For by Covetousness, Christ here plainly designs, and forbids such an over-eager desire of, and application to the getting, or keeping Wealth as is inconsistent with Justice or Charity; that care we ought to take of our poor Brethren out of Love to God a-

bove all things, and a settled Resolution to please him in disposal of our Riches. The Nature, Folly, and Danger of which Crying Sin, our Lord sets forth and represents for our Instruction, in this following Parable. A Rich Man in a very Plentiful Year, being at a loss where to bestow all his Increase, resolves to pull down his Barns, and to build much Larger. And when all his Goods were safely layd up, he means to spend the rest of his Life in Ease and Pleasure; to enjoy all he hath himself alone, without any regard to the needs of others, and without making any Reflection, whence that Plenty came, for what end it was sent him, or what account he was to make for it. *Soul*, saith he *ver. 19. Thou hast much Goods layd up for many Years, take thine Ease, Eat, Drink and be merry, or Feast.* We have here the Uncharitable Rich Mans Character: He is laying up Treasure for himself only, without any consideration either of God or Man. His Estate is all his own, and he, or his will enjoy it all themselves. He knows no happiness, nor desires any other, save only what his Wealth can procure him: And as for the Poor, God can provide for them without his help. Now in the next words, the Folly and Disappointment, the Misery and Ruine of this poor Inconsiderate Sensual Wretch, are exposed by our Saviour for a warning to others. But God said unto him, *Thou Fool, this night thy Soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* Those many Years he promised himself, are at an end in one night; the goods he reckons upon are no longer his; and he is called to give an account of the abuse of his Trust; and must expect the sad doom of an Unjust Steward, who had either Riotously wasted, or Covetously hoarded up for himself, what his Lord put into his hands
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for the Maintenance and Relief of his Fellow-Servants. *So is he, saith our Lord, that layeth up Treasure for himself, and is not Rich towards God.* Such is he in design and practise, and such is the issue of his ill-natured folly; *so* very Foolish, *so* wholly Disappointed, and Miserable is that Man, who is more concern'd about getting or keeping an Estate, than about employing a good part of it in Works of Mercy.

Having thus set this Text in its true light, and shewn its coherence with, and relation to, the foregoing Precept and Parable of our Lord; and that it is the Explication of the one, and the Moral of the other: I shall use this Method in my discourse thereon.

1. I shall a little more fully explain and enlarge upon its true sense and meaning.

2. I shall propound to your view and consideration that General Doctrine which seems to be the main Scope and Design of the whole, and make good the truth of it by proper Arguments.

3. I shall make some Reflections pertinent to this matter.

First, Then as to the meaning of the phrases here used, *Laying up treasure for a mans self*, evidently imports his getting, or keeping, or using superfluous wealth; what is over and above either the necessities, or true natural, (not fantastical imaginary) conveniences of life, only for himself, or his own nearest Relations; or to gratify any inordinate appetites, such as are the too great love of money, or of sensual pleasures, or vain-glorious pride; and this without taking notice of, and relieving the wants of other men. And, on the contrary, *to be rich towards God*, implies our having a due regard to his will and Laws in the getting, and managing our wealth, and behaving our
selves

selves as STEWARDS, not as LORDS, and absolute Proprietors of those gifts we receive from GOD. So that, if we joyn both these expressions together, to *Lay up Treasure for our selves*, and not to be RICH towards GOD, will signify, both from the force of the words, and the whole Scope of the Parable, so to get, or keep, or use wealth, as not to have due respect to Almighty God, as to the Supream giver or disposer of it; and to that end for which it was lent us, and the use we ought to put some good part of that to, of which we have no true need our selves; or to place our chief Happiness in our Riches, *Soul, take thine ease*; or in those bodily, barely-Animal Pleasures to which they chiefly Minister; or those empty Titles, Preference, or other Worldly advantages they usually procure, so as not to employ what we have to spare, at least, a very considerable part of a large Income, in supplying the wants of the Honest and Industrious Poor. All this is apparently imply'd in that preposterous care, and perverse mis-management of riches here condemned by our Lord under the name of laying up Treasure for our selves, and not being rich towards God. And the word *So, οὕτως*, connecting this *verse* to the preceding parable, and applying it to the whole Scheme by way of Accommodation and Resemblance, gives us this general sense, as the drift and purport of our Lords discourse on this Subject: Consider how gross the folly, how unreasonable the procedure, and how certain, and withal, how terrible the defeat of such a Rich Man's hope must soon be, who had no consideration for other mens needs, no end, no God but himself, when he is surpriz'd by death; and then, Take heed and beware of such Covetousness, and irregular self-love as is here Exemplify'd

fyd: Of hoarding up for your selves what God entrusted you with for the support, and comfort of his Children. *So is he, i. e.* such a short-sighted unthinking fool, as this here in the Parable: *So* unmindful of God his great Master and Benefactor; *So* inhuman and regardless of his poor BRETHREN, who perish for want of those provisions which his barns could not hold, and might have saved him the labour of building new ones; and *So* miserably disappointed at the last; and *So* lost and *So* undone for ever is that wretched man, who spends all his time, and care, and strength in increasing, or preserving his wealth; or abuses it to Luxury, or to pride and vanity, without taking care *To be Rich towards God*, or to lay out a good proportion of his abundance in those works of mercy which God doth require of him in this, and will reward him for in the next life. So much for the Explication and Meaning of the Words.

Secondly, The general Doctrine deducible from this Parable, as the main drift and design of it seems to be this; That, as it is too much the Custom, so it is both the mighty folly, and error, the disappointment and the ruin of too many Rich men, that they are more intent upon adding to their heap, and keeping it together; or in lavishing out their store unduly upon themselves; or on too carefully laying it up for their posterity, than upon managing their great affluence so as may turn to their best account in the next life; and may most comply with that end, for which this Talent was put into their hands. Or, that he is extremely foolish who sets his heart more upon leaving a great Estate at his death, than upon doing a great deal of good with it in his life time. And on the other side, the rich man's diligent study and practise of Beneficence and

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Charity,

Charity, is the true measure of his Wildom, as well as the proper duty of his place and station.

Now the truth of this Doctrin will manifestly appear from these four following considerations. They are extreemly foolish, and like to him here mentioned, who *Lay up Treasure for themselves, and are not Rich towards God.*

1. Because all those who thirst after wealth immoderately, or use great portions of it in the service of any vice, mistake the nature and end of Riches.

2. Because they understand not the true use and mighty advantage which may be made of them, when they are employ'd so as they ought to be.

3. Because by neglecting, or coming short in their works of mercy, they deprive themselves of the chief, or only Remedy against the certain danger and usual mischief of Worldly prosperity, and so make it hard for themselves to be saved.

4. Because as their Riches make it hard, so their ill, or no use of them, and total want of Charity make it impossible for them to be saved, if they die in that state.

1. They who are wholly taken up with the care and thoughts of mony, and over joy'd with great possessions, are very unwise, because they are much mistaken in the nature and value, & power, and end of that which they make their Capital, their chief Affair. For they falsely suppose that a great deal of wealth will furnish all that is needful to make them truly Happy. But now the contrary Assertion to this too Fatal Error, is laid down by our Blessed Lord as the very reason why we ought to take heed and beware of Covetousness, or a desire of having too much, all we can get any way; for, saith he, *A Mans life consisteth not in the abundance of the things*

things which he possesseth, i. e. No Mans life can be either prolonged one moment, or made more truly happy by such a surplusage of riches as neither the necessities, nor true Conveniences of life demand.

All happiness pretended to beyond this Compe-
tency, either in the bare possessing, or in Luxuriously
and vainly expending much wealth, is but a diseased
fancy and illusion of brain-sick men. And 'tis well
known that all such false Appetites and Ill-grounded
desires are as unsatiable, as they are unnatural, and
unreasonable. Neither the wealthiest Prince that e-
ver was, nor the greatest Conqueror, had ever Gold,
or Empire enough to make him easy and 'contented,
as long as there was still any more in the world.

And no man can be happy who is not pleased with
his present condition.

But besides this, Riches can neither make a man
Wife nor Good : which is the proper felicity of rati-
onal, intelligent beings. They rise no higher than to
provide for, and gratify the body which is the husk
and shell only, or the prison, as some call it, of that
immortal spirit, which distinguishes us from the brute
Beasts; and so must raise us to another kind, and pitch
of Happiness than what we can have in Common with
them.

And this made *Socrates* suspend his judgment con-
cerning the happiness of the great King, or *Persian Mo-
narch*, till he was better inform'd, how much Wisdom
and Vertue he had. And for the same reason, he refused
to say, that another newly made a mighty rich man
was happy, until he saw what use he would make of
his Estate. For by these he rightly measured the fe-
licity of every man; and affirm'd, that all other things
which mis-judging vulgar minds dote on, Riches, and

Honours, and Kingdoms, &c. had no great matter in them, were of no Consequence at all in order to make men happy. And a very Knowing Man of our Nation (Lord *Verulam*) assures us, as well from his own, as from the Universal experience of Mankind, That Great Persons must borrow other Mens opinions to think themselves Happy: For if they judge by what they feel only, they cannot find any such thing.

Thus are these fond Admirers of Riches altogether ignorant of the true Nature and Power, or indeed, Impotency, Inability of Wealth, to procure and to establish any happiness to Man; and consequently they are miserably fool'd and abus'd in a False expectation of what it can never perform. Since no Solid Rational satisfaction of the mind of Man ever was, or can be ever found, either in those low despicable Pleasures of Sense, in which the Bruits, or rival, or perhaps excel Man; or in all the Pageantry of Secular Greatness, the empty Smoke, Dust and Noise of Worldly Poms and Vanities; to which only, abundance always can, and commonly doth exalt, and then abuse and puff up those weak untaught minds who know no better things.

Nor do these Men much reflect upon the fleeting fading Nature of these Transitory things; the great uncertainty there is of their possessing them one Day; *Thou Fool*, may God say to every one of them, *this night thy Soul shall be required of thee*: Nor upon the as great certainty that they can not long enjoy, what is the only Good they care to have.

But now, he who understands the true nature of these things, and is too discerning to be brought by such thin appearances of Happiness into the common Paradise of Fools, looks upon a mighty Revenue, rather as a great Burthen and Incumbrance, a thought-
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ful careful Province, and a Busy Steward-ship.

And all that can make it, I say not desirable or valuable, but tolerable to such a man, is the hopes he hath by his wise management of his ten Talents to bring Honour to his Great Master, and obtain the Reward promised to the good and faithful Servant. His being a Large Dispencer, and Instrument of the Divine Bounty to the Family of God, is both the joy and support of his Spirit, and the only true advantage of his having more then he needs, or would otherwise have the trouble of, if it were to be mispent in the too generally received methods of the World.

Second, The Folly of those who are more intent upon laying up Treasures on Earth than in Heaven, or upon having a great Estate, than making a due and good use of what they have, is seen in this; that they do not consider enough, nor understand what the best and true use of Wealth is, and how it may be most improved. It were easie for God so to order things here below, that no Man should need to be Poor; but the Poor and Rich have from this variety and difference of their outward circumstances, opportunity of exercising several Graces and Virtues which could not otherwise subsist and have place amongst Men. The Pious and Industrious Poor, have hereby occasion to exercise their Patience and Submission to the Will of God, and their dependence on, and trust in him for a supply to their wants. And the Rich have manifold invitations and opportunities to shew the sincerity of their love to God, and to their Brethren, by their Liberality; as also to express their thankfulness to God for these outward Blessings, and that he has put them into that more happy station of being Givers rather than Receivers; and hereby to own that as all they have is from God, so it ought

ought to be managed with regard to his will and pleasure, and for his greater Glory.

Beneficence also gives us a peculiar Title to the Favour and Blessing, and Protection of God here in this Life; nay, even to more Wealth, if God sees it to be best for us.

St. Hierom affirms, that he did not remember to have read, that any Person ever had died an ill Death, who had been a great Alms-giver in his Life time. And we read, *Prov. 11. 24, 25. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to Poverty. The Liberal Soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself.*

But as a large diffusive Charity, and imparting to others in a good proportion to what Abundance God hath blessed us with, is the proper use of a great Income, so is it the best improvement we can possibly make of it; this is here styled, *Being Rich towards God*, and by our Lord, *Laying up for our selves Treasure in Heaven*, Mat. 6. 20. or having Treasure in Heaven. 'Tis putting so much stock into the Hands of God to be there Secured and Improv'd for us and ours, upon the best assurance, even his own Word, of having so much of it repaid to us again, or to ours in this World, as God knows to be best for us or them. *Prov. 19. 17. He that hath pity upon the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he repay him again.*

But above all, this is the certain, and perhaps the only way, for Rich Men both to secure to themselves a Crown of Righteousness thro' the Mercy of God in Christ, and to increase the Weight and Glory of that Crown in Gods Kingdom. Our Blessed Lord promises a Reward to him, who shall give a Cup of cold Water

ter only, to any of his in the Name of a Disciple, *i. e.* because they belong to him, *Mat. 10. 24.* And in that description of the Day of Judgment, *Mat. 25.* he is pleased to assign no other cause of his putting the Blessed of his Father into possession of that Kingdom prepared for them from the Foundation of the World, but only their having Fed and Cloathed him when he Hungry and Naked, and taken him in when he was a Stranger, and visited him when he was Sick and in Prison; *i. e.* their having relieved and taken care of his Brethren in their Needs and Distresses, which he therefore interprets as if done to himself, and accordingly rewards with everlasting Happiness.

Thirdly, Very Rich men, if they are not given to Charity, and that in a good proportion to their Superfluous Riches, are very foolish, because by their failing in this duty, they neglect and deprive themselves of the most efficacious, if not the only sure remedy, against the danger and mischief of worldly prosperity; And that great difficulty our Saviour has told us there is for them to enter into the Kingdom of God.

'Tis either the too great love, and over-value men have for Riches; their setting their heart upon them, placing their confidence in them; or their abuse of them, to the support, and gratification of their Ambition and Pride, or their Sensuality; and their forgetfulness of God, which make it harder for a Rich Man, as Christ positively affirms, *Mat. 19. 24. To enter into the Kingdom of God, than it is for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle.* And the only way that God takes, as far as we can know, to work this Miracle, for those Rich Men who do enter into his Kingdom, or become true sincere Christians, is by infusing this Grace of Charity into their Souls; whereby he makes
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them Willing and Desirous to part with so much of their Wealth to the Poor, that they may have good Store of Treasure laid up for them in Heaven; and by this means their hearts are loosned and dis-entangled from these perishing things, and centred upon God as their last end, and Supream Felicity.

It was the want of this Spiritual Wisdom, and disposition to beneficence, which made that young man who gave occasion to that hard and amazing saying, Forsake Christ. He went away with a sorrow proportionable to the greatness of his wealth. *He was very sorrowful*, Luk. 18. 23. *For he was very Rich*. And he fondly chose rather to part with all hopes of that Eternal Life he had been so earnestly enquiring after, than with the great possessions he was master of.

Certainly did Rich Men consider well the horrible danger they are in, of being lost forever upon account of their Riches, (if they will believe our LORD and MASTER,) they would never have St. Paul's charge out of their mind, which he enjoyns *Timothy* to give them, 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18. They would neither be high-minded, insolent, or despisers of others, only for having less mony than they have; nor trust in their uncertain Riches, but in the living God; from whom they receive them, and whose Stewards they are. They would then make it their chief business, their Trade or Calling, and look upon it as their greatest concern, and true interest to do good to those who need them, to be Rich in good Works; They would esteem these the best and most valuable part of their wealth, because they will be of use to them in the next life, and consequently would be ready to distribute and willing to communicate.

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The Apostle backs his Exhortation with this irresistible Argument to all who believe another world, *viz.* That Rich Men do hereby lay up in Store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on Eternal Life. Since then a studied well-Proportioned bounty to the Poor, is the most sure preservative against those destructive poysons of Mens Souls, *viz.* Covetousness, Pride, Luxury, Intemperance of all sorts; which are so often the successful Temptations of Wealth, that only the wisest and best Men (which are not always the greatest number among the Rich,) are able to resist them, it must needs be the worst Husbandry, and the greatest folly in the world not to lay out our money upon so great advantage; and not to starve our own excesses, and irregular courses, by making a plentiful provision for our necessitous brethren.

Fourthly, The undoing folly and misery of all Uncharitable Rich Men, is palpably manifest in this, *viz.* That by such unfaithfulness to their trust, and inhumanity towards their brethren, they destroy all hopes of being Happy in the next State. Wealth, and that power, and interest which it usually makes way for, and procures, are those particular Talents which God hath committed to their management; and are therefore to be carefully, and diligently improv'd by them, to his Honour, and their own Personal good, and advantage in the other world, by their feeding and cloathing, and relieving and assisting all the distressed afflicted members of their Common Saviour. But now, if instead of giving their Lord's Household meat in due season, they shall be arrogant and injurious upon the strength of their Riches; and shall Eat and Drink with the Drunken, if they shall spend in the En-

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tainment of their own Vices what they receiv'd for the benefit and use of their Fellow Servants, *their Lord shall come in a day when they look not for him, Mat. 24. 50. And shall cut them asunder;* (which was the punishment of false Knaves and Cheating Villains) and shall appoint them their Portion with the Hypocrites, where there shall be weeping and Gnashing of Teeth, *i. e.* in the endless Torments of Hell Fire. Thus now have I made good, I hope, that Proposition which I advanced as the general Scope of this Parable, *viz.* That 'tis a mighty folly, and will prove a terrible disappointment at the last to all those inconsiderate men who are more concern'd to heap up Riches for themselves, or their Children; or more forward to mispend their wealth in any unjustifiable way of Sin or Vanity; than to employ their overplus in such works of Piety and Charity, as make for the Honour of God, and the succour and relief of his Children, and Servants. Or, that he is the very Fool, here called so by God himself, who makes it more his aim and business to be a great, than a Good Man; and to be Rich and High in this World, than to be for ever happy in that which is to come.

For, *So is he*; So is every one of these narrow Souls, these self-seeking Rich Men; 1. *So* mistaken in the nature of Wealth, and so abused in his Expectation of Happiness; 2. *So* ignorant of its true and best use, and of the great advantage may be made by employing it so as it ought to be; 3. *So* negligent, and unwary in obviating, and preventing the danger which all Rich Men are in, and the harm and mischief which most receive from too great Abundance; 4. *So* for ever ruin'd by the mis-use of his Talent, is that man, *who lays up Treasure for himself, and is not Rich*

Rich towards God. So Unwise, so Dis-appointed, and so Finally Undone is that Miserable Man, who having not made himself Friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, (if not unjustly gotten, at least too often unjustly detained, or unjustly used, as well as) Fading, Unstable, Perishing Wealth, can have no just or good hopes that he shall ever be received into Everlasting habitations, Gods Eternal Kingdom of Glory.

Now if want of Beneficence, and of due proportions of Works of Mercy be the apparent Folly, and Sin, and Ruine of those Rich Men who have no regard to Gods Laws, and the wants of others, in disposing of their Estates; it hence follows, That a due care about, and a Consciencious discharge of the obligation they have thereto, is the wisdom and happiness, of those who use their Wealth to the glory of God, and the good of Men; or, that a Rich Man's well-proportioned Charity, is the best mark of his Prudence and Discretion.

For some of the chief Properties and Rules of wisdom are, I think, generally agreed to be these:

Making a right Judgment of the Nature, and Intrinsic Worth and Value of those things we are concerned to understand.

Looking to the most distant issues and consequents of them. A wise Man sees as far before him as he can.

Knowing how to make the true use and best improvement, or advantage of them to our selves.

Being aware of, and avoiding all inconvenience or harm, we might otherwise come to suffer by, or from them.

Propounding to our selves in general the Best and Noblest End, *i. e.* the Highest degree of Happiness we are made capable of by our Nature, or the Favour of God.

And then steadily pursuing this end by all requisite, most fit and proper ways, and means.

Now he who makes it his main design, the affair and business of his Life, to *be Rich towards God*; to have his chief Treasure in Heaven, and his Heart there also, even whilst he is in this Earthly Tabernacle; he understands the nature & properties of Wealth, and what he may, or may not expect from it. He knows how little will serve the needs of the Body, and furnish all those conveniences which a wise and good Man can think worth having: And that whatever is over and above this, hath no other good in it, save what arises from our using it to the good of others. He reckons so much only of his Estate to be properly his, as he either uses himself, in compliance with the modest demands of Nature, and the dictates of sober reason; or as he remits and sends before him into that Heavenly Country and House of his Father, towards which he is advancing every day, and where his Treasure will be of the greatest benefit to him; *That only is mine which I either make use of my self, or give for Gods sake.*

Quello è mio
che io godo,
& dono per
Dio.

He prudently considers the few Moments he is to spend here as a point, as nothing, in comparison with that eternal duration for which he is design'd and made; and that single thought destroys and annihilates all those false appearances of happiness which either the gross pleasures of Sense, or the thin air of Applause, or the noise of secular State and Grandeur, which are usually founded in & supported by store of Money, can any way pretend to.

He judges of all these things as God doth (whose Judgment is the Rule and Standard of Truth) and who values Men by their true Wisdom and Virtue, their Piety and Charity, their Meekness and Humility; not
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by their Birth, or Titles, or Riches, or any Quality which the weakest and worst of Men may share equally with the Best and the Wisest.

He knows that the only true use of very great Affluence, is doing a very great deal of good to very many, to the Honour of God, and out of obedience to his Commands; that this is the highest improvement of perishable goods, and the only way to change their nature, and make them durable for ever; since he will find the Rewards of his Charity, in an Endless state of Felicity.

His neither valuing himself upon his Riches, nor trusting in them; his Poverty of Spirit, his Humility and Contempt of the World, when he hath most of it; and parting with what others wait in Pride and Luxury, to Feed his poor Brother, secure him from the danger of Wealth; He hath never any thing to spare for any Vice; and thus doth his Wealth make his way to Heaven more Easie and more Pleasant too: Nor is Poverty it self so safe a Road thither, as Riches are to such a Mastering Mind.

He proposes to himself the Best and Noblest end, Everlasting Life, or the enjoyment of that Supreme Good, from whence he came, (and for, as well as by whom, he was made) to Eternal Ages. This he knows is the only true and proper, peculiar Happiness of Immortal Spirits. He therefore values all things here below in proportion to their capacity, and tendency to serve him in order to his Great, his only Aim and Concern, to live with God for ever. To this end therefore, he will chiefly use his Wealth, and whatever Power or Interest that can give him.

And whereas Riches too commonly make Men forget both God and themselves, they make this Wise Man
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more mindful of both; since he is always contriving how he may discharge his Trust to his Lord, and how he may avoid those Temptations and Snares into which they fall *who will be Rich*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. who set their hearts upon getting Money, or place their Happiness in it; who love the World, and the things of this World to that degree, as to stifle the Love of God in their Souls, and that regard they ought to have to his Law and Will.

I shall conclude with a Reflection or two arising from, or pertinent to this matter.

I If we desire rather to be *RICH* towards *GOD*, than to lay up Treasure for our selves, i. e. to exercise the Grace of Charity vigorously, in due measure, from right Principles, and most to our own advantage; we must endeavour to have our minds thoroughly possessed with, & influenced by a sincere hearty love to God. For on this our love to God above all things, we must found all that unfeigned affection, and good will we bear to Men, which will be a constant spur, and restless incentive to all good offices they can need, and we perform.

Our Blessed Lord having answered that Question, *Which is the great Commandment of the Law?* Mat. 22. in these terms, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind*, adds of his own accord, and as a certain consequent of the former, *And the 2d. is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*. Now our Lord thus connecting these together, and making them joyntly the sum of the Law and the Prophets; that in which they all conspire, or the Abridgment, the whole of our duty; doth hereby evidently instruct us; That as the love and kindness we have for our Brethren is Inseparable from that sincere love we bear to God, so it must be ever ground-

grounded thereon. We must therefore love, be kind and helpful to all Men, because we love that God whose Image they bear in common with our selves; whose Children they also are as well as we; who hath commanded us to love them as we do our selves, & as he loved us, when he sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins, 1 *John* 4. 10, 11. and to reconcile us again to himself by his death on the Cross. And if we do thus love our Brethren, we shall gladly take all occasions to assist and relieve them, we shall be as forward to help them, as we desire they should be to help us, were we in the like distress.

'Tis this, this inward affection, and hearty love to others, out of that Love and Duty we owe to God, which is both a Never-failing Spring, and the very Life and Soul of all External acts of Charity. And if this be wanting, tho' we should bestow all our goods to feed the Poor, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. if we were never so Bountiful out of Vain-glory, or from any other Carnal Worldly consideration, it would profit us nothing; it would be no discharge of our obligation, it would be of no account in the sight of God.

2. Since Works of Mercy are so much every Man's concern in his Station, and so much every Rich Mans, especial, proper Duty, and mighty, indeed only advantage, they must be a good part of every Rich Man's business too, of his thought, contrivance, and especial care. It were therefore very good and adviseable, (if not necessary) that all Men, and particularly all Rich Men, should seriously and attentively weigh and consider with themselves, what proportion of their Estates it were fit for them to Allot and Consecrate every Year to Pious uses, and to lay by such a part as they resolve on, out of every Sum they receive; which would
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have this good effect, among many others, that they would generally be ready for, and glad of all good occasions of distributing to the necessities of the Poor. And tho God hath given us no set Rule whereby to estimate this proportion, yet we may doubtless make one for our selves; in which our main care ought to be, that our Rule be not too narrow, that we do nor too little. A defect here may prove our final undoing, whereas an Excess, if such a thing can be imagined, would be sure to encrease our reward in the next life. A Learned and Exemplary Divine of our Church (Dr. *Hammond*) in a Sermon Preach't upon this very occasion before the then Lord Mayor and Aldermen of this City; observes, that every Jew (not the Rich only) was obliged (besides several other ways of relieving the Poor mentioned in the Law of *Moses*) to pay a Tenth part of all his Increase or Income every Third Year, which is æquivalent to one Thirtieth part every Year, to the use, and maintenance of the Poor, *Deut.* 14. 28, 29. And this was Styled their Righteousness, their necessary Obedience to the Law, and the lowest degree of Charity among them: But the Good and Merciful Men, even of the *Jews*, were such as did much out-do what this Law exacted. Our Lord declares, That except *our Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*, (who practised such external duties doubtless at an higher rate than the common *Jews*) *we shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* From all these premises, that Learned Man infers, beyond all colour of contradiction, that the proportion of the Christian Alms-giver, to speak at the least, must be more than the Thirtieth part of his Yearly Revenue, or Increase. Now altho' it be true, that this Law given to the *Jews*, doth not oblige us Christians in the
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Letter of it, yet (as he well remarks) Gods Judgment to his People at that time, and in that State is worth our observing. But then we are here to remember, that every *Jew*, who had any Income or Increase, was ty'd to pay this Thirtieth part towards the maintenance of the Poor, even those who had least to spare; so that if Christians in moderate circumstances, who have any thing to spare, are to exceed this Proportion, as hath been shewed; those who are Rich, who have a great deal more than they need, must be worse than *Jews*, if they make so low and scanty a Rule for their practise; for none who was accounted a Good or Merciful Man among them, contented himself with doing so little. Some considerate Persons being in that mediocrity, or competency of these outward good things, that neither Poverty nor Riches, which was the Wise Man's choice, (and would be the choice of all Wise Men, if our Lords Judgment were thoroughly weighed and believed by them; since the Richer they are, the more hard still it is for them to be saved) some of these sober and serious Christians, I say, have thought one Tenth part of their Yearly Revenue, or Annual Profits arising any other way, a Proportion low enough for them to bestow in Works of Mercy. But Rich Men, and especially those who are very Rich, if they are very Wise too, will scarce stint themselves, it is to be hoped, (in many circumstances at least) to a rate so disproportionable to their abilities. *Zaccheus's* Example, who besides restoring four fold, if it should appear that he had wronged any Man, gave half his goods to the Poor, is a much fitter Precedent for some of those who have very great Estates, *i. e.* who have much more than they can spend every Year in such ways as they will be able to answer for

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to God at the last day, that great day of Accounts. Certainly every Rich Man will do himself great right, in often and seriously reflecting upon that Parable delivered by our Lord, *Luk. 16. 19. &c.* for his particular Caution and instruction. That Rich man there, hath neither impiety, nor rapine, or injustice, nor any other flagrant Crime laid to his Charge: All we are told of him is, that he was Clothed in purple and fine linnen and fared sumptuously every day; and that he did not feed the poor beggar with the crumbs which fell from his table, *i. e.* He lived very great, maintain'd his port, and quality in the world, indulg'd himself in the excesses of Luxury and Vanity, whilst the poor starv'd for want of that which his haughty Pride and Ryot made him think he needed for his own self. And the next thing we hear of him, is, that he is dead and buried, and in Torments in Hell Fire.

The learned *Grotius* asks this question from the place, which I fear it will be hard for many Rich and Great Men satisfactorily to answer; *Quomodo igitur pœnam hanc diviti inflictam evadet pars magna Christianorum?* How will so many Christians, as imitate this Rich man's Example, be able to escape those Torments in Hell to which he is doom'd? For tho' all the Alms in the world can never purchase Heaven (for Eternal Life is the gift of God thro' Jesus Christ our Lord, *Rom. 6. 23.*) yet want of a competent, proportionable Charity, alone, and without any other sin? may prove, as sure a way to lose Heaven, as all the *Atheism* and Irreligion, all the Lewdness and Wickedness any Man was ever guilty of.

And since Christ gives no other reason of mens Condemnation at the day of judgment, but this only, (tho' others doubtless there will be) we cannot but conclude.

conclude, that want of due Charity will be then, tho' not the only, yet to be sure a very principal and general Article against those forever unhappy men. And seeing that a narrow, slender, contracted Charity, altogether disproportionable to the Rich mans Abilities, will in all reason, be esteemed by God as no Charity at all; All Rich men are as nearly concern'd to Study this point well, and to practise this duty with care and diligence, as they are not to perish with their money, and not to come into that place of Torments. And they ought therefore frequently to have in their thoughts that saying of our Lord, *Luk. 12. 48.* which is equally applicable to all Talents, as well of Riches as any other; *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have Committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

3. It would be a great, and worthy effect of a noble and Universal Beneficence or Charity, in those who have wealth, and power, and credit among us, to use all the interest they can make in procuring a publick National Establishment of a truly - Honourable Society of men, who should make it their business, out of love to God, and Compassion towards their Brethren, to know among them all, the number and condition in all particulars, of all the poor in this Kingdom, and especially in and about this great City: That so all those who are able, might be forced to maintain themselves by their own labour; and both those whose labour is not able to provide enough for their great charge, and those who are unfit for any work at all, (which will be but few,) may be sufficiently and decently provided for, and maintain'd as Sons of the same Father, and Brethren of our common Lord and Saviour Christ. If it were seriously considered and laid to

heart how many are starv'd every year in their own houses, and some too in the streets, with hunger, or cold, or want of necessaries in one kind or other, (which amount to some hundreds in and about this City some years, as I have heard from those who have reason to know) we should look upon this as such a Disgrace and Contradiction to our Religion, which is the Law of Love, and the highest obligation thereto on so many accounts; and withal so great a guilt upon all who had, or might have power to remedy it, (if not on the whole Nation) that every Man would do his best to promote such a brave design; without which 'tis very hard, if at all possible, that so Crying a Sin, and so Culpable a Neglect, which must lay some where, should be wholly and effectually prevented.

Now that such wise and good men among us as have Estates, and Souls large enough to extend their Charitable Provision for the Poor to all after Ages, and desire to do good with their wealth as long as the world shall last, may have encouragement from the successful, as well as Pious Examples of their Predecessours, I shall read to you (as the Custom is) the following account of the upright and prudent Management of all those publick foundations which are under the care and Government of the Lord Mayor, Commonalty, and Citizens of this Great and Ancient City for the year last past.

A True Report of the great Number of Poor Children, &c.

FROM which Report I shall observe these Two Things only.

First, That Christ's Hospital was not in condition to receive any one Child this last year into their House; partly, by reason of those great Debts they still labour under; and partly, by reason of their having taken in so many the year before that.

Secondly, That the Governours of *St. Thomas Hospital*, notwithstanding their present necessary, and very chargeable Expence in Building, have not one bed less in that house, than were before; nor have deny'd any one Person who came for Cure, when there was a Vacancy; And that the Number of those who have been there Cured this year last past exceeds that of any former year whatever.

So that Generous and well-disposed minds, have here also, as well as among those great numbers of Poor, who stand in need of present relief, fit objects for a Magnificent and Overflowing Bounty.

To Conclude all; Let every one of us in the fear of God, and as we tender the welfare of our own Immortal Souls, take due care to be rightly informed of the necessity of this Great and Fundamental Duty, and the indispensable obligation we have thereto, in our measure and capacity. Let us frequently reflect upon our own Conduct, and consider how we shall be able to Answer our Judge when he shall proceed to give Sentence upon us, according to our demeanour in
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relation to his distressed Members: And in order hereto, let us deeply fix, and often revolve in our minds these Avowed Maximes of Right Reason, and our Holy Religion, as so many irresistible motives to do good, and to Communicate.

That the time we have to spend in this World is but a Moment, an indivisible Point, and next to Nothing, in proportion to that Eternity we are all made for, and are hastning to apace. That consequently hereto, 'tis the first, and most pernicious Error, (*πρῶτον ψεδος*) that which leads to all the mistakes and sins Men commit here, *viz.*

That they look upon this short span of Frail Mortal Life, (which is but their first step and entrance into being) as their All, that for which they were wholly made, and so their Great and Only Concern, Affair, and Business; and do live, and govern themselves, by this most false and most destructive Principle.

Whereas the Main thing Christ teaches us, is to manage this present Life only in order to the next; and to esteem nothing to be of any great consequence to us, but what may secure and promote our Happiness in that endless State which is before us; and to look upon all things, as mean, low, and scarce worth our Consideration, which have no tendency to this our Master-design, *viz.* To be for ever Happy in the presence and enjoyment of that Sovereign Good, for which we were made. That every Man is truly Valuable, only as God Values him. *Tantus est quisq; quantus apud Deum.* That he only is Great indeed, who is Great in the sight of the Lord, *Luk 1. 15.* who is Holy and Pious, Just and Merciful, who Loves and Honours God above all things, and makes his Will and Law the Rule of his Life and Actions.

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That nothing is more Reasonable in it self, nothing more agreeable to Humane Nature, (whence Humanity, which imports all obliging kindness, hath its Name) than that we should assist and relieve others, made in the same Image, and after the same Likeness of God, our common Father; and who are of his Family and Household, and his Children, as well as we are, with that overplus which God bestows upon us for this very end.

That if we do not this in a good proportion to our Abilities, we are unfaithful Stewards of our Lords Estate; and it will fare accordingly with us at that great and universal Audit.

That this Duty of Brotherly Love and Beneficence, is more earnestly commanded, and more frequently insisted upon in the H. Scriptures than any other.

That it is the most natural and irrefragable Proof of our Love to God, and our Gratitude to our Lord and Saviour Christ; and a peculiar Mark of our Election to Eternal Life, and of our being Gods Children indeed, *Col.* 3. 12.

That want of Bowels of Compassion to our needy Brother, is a demonstration, That the love of God dwells not in us, 1 *John* 3. 17. And consequently, that all pretence to Religion and Piety, is Vain, False and Hypocritical, without a competent Love to, and Practise of this Grace and Virtue, *Jam.* 1. 27.

That doing a great deal of good to others, is the nearest approach which we can make to the Divine Nature, and Gods imitable perfections; whom we do herein chiefly resemble.

That it is only such an outrageous, criminal love of the World, as is wholly incompatible with the love of God,

God, which makes Rich Men such slaves to their Money; or to such fancy'd necessities of maintaining their Port, and outward State and Quality at such an height, and so much to the prejudice of the Poor, that they are able to return to God, by his Receivers, so little of what he hath entrusted them with: But our Lord gives us no reason to believe, that such vain ill-founded Pleas will avail men any thing at his just Tribunal.

They are only those inordinate desires, and undue gratifications of the senses of the Body, or vices of the Mind, *viz.* Pride, Ambition, Covetousness, which exhaust that Treasure that should be lay'd up in Heaven, *i. e.* layd out in Works of Piety, and Mercy. So that in Conclusion, nothing but Brutish stupidity, or sensuality; or the improvident thoughtfulness of a Child, or of an Ideot; or the Pride or Malignity of an Apostate Spirit, can wholly extinguish the care, and destroy the practice of Beneficence and Charity. For the poor Covetous wretch is as proud of his large scope of Ground, or his great Heap of Gold, as the Haughty, Insolent, Ambitious Man is of his Place or Title, (which perhaps his Wealth purchased him, or his Ancestor) or the Prodigal is, of his intemperate Luxurious Feasts; or the Vain, Empty and Gay Man is, of the Fine Shew & Figure he thinks he makes in Dress or Equipage. 'Tis only, I say, that Spirit and Air of the World which Christianity obliges us to Mortify; that World, to which we ought to be Crucified, or Dead to, which drowns its Children in foolish and hurtful Lusts, in forgetfulness of God, of themselves, and of their Neccessitous Brethren; and afterwards, through gross neglect of this Duty, in final perdition and destruction.

That Alms-giving, is Trading with Heaven; that is the highest improvement, and best advantage Rich Men

Men can possibly make of their Wealth; and withal a sure way never to lose any part of it. This is the nature of Riches, saith *St. Basil*, that if you give it liberally to the indigent, you have it still; 'tis your own for ever: If you keep it all to your self, you have it not; to be sure you cannot have it long, and you will for ever repent that you had it at all. Charity alone can turn this Fading, Perishing Wealth into the true Riches; it will entitle us to all those Favours and Graces God here bestows upon his dearest Children, and to that Everlasting Happiness which he reserves for their Portion in the next World. Since Christ owns what is done to his poor Brethren, as done to Himself, and will accordingly Reward it in His Heavenly Kingdom.

And that Christ will at the last day (of which we cannot be too often reminded) have such an especial particular regard to this most important Duty; and will proceed upon it as one, if not the Main Article, of his enquiry into our Lives; and that our Final Doom, our Happy or Miserable Estate to all Eternity, will in so very great measure depend, and turn upon the account we shall be able to give of our selves with relation hereto.

In a word, Let us consider seriously and often, that Beneficence and Charity, is the most Natural and Reasonable; The most Commanded; The most Indispensable; The most Noble; The most Delightful; The most Advantageous; The most Christian: Nay, the most Divine and God-like Grace and Virtue.

And let us all from the Cogency of so many Reasons, out of Love to our Good God, and our Lord, and Saviour Christ; to our Neighbours, and to our own Immortal Souls, so make it our Care and Study, and

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Business, to Assist and Comfort, and Relieve our Blessed Lord in those Poor Needy Persons, who are both his, and our Brethren; that we also may with them be made Heirs of that Kingdom God hath prepared for all His Children, for all truly Pious, all truly Charitable and Merciful Men.

*To which, God of his Mercy bring us all, thro'
Jesus Christ our Lord; To whom, &c.*

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